

Don't Rent Trouble

Advice on checking out apartments

Finding a decent place to rent requires thorough inspections of apartments and the strength to keep looking when apartments don't pan out. We recommend you take along a:

- flashlight
- light bulb
- hairdryer
- pen or pencil
- this checklist

These will be your inspection tools. Use the following list to check for problems.

Electrical

- ? Turn on each switch to see if it works.
- ? If there is no bulb in the socket, use yours.
- ? Check every outlet by plugging in your hair dryer. Obviously, there are problems if a fuse blows out or the dryer won't go on.
- ? If outlets or sockets don't work, there could be dan-

gerous defects in the electrical system that could cause a fire.

Plumbing

- ? Turn on the sink and bathtub faucets to see if they work or leak.
- ? Flush the toilet to see if it operates properly or leaks.
- ? Do the drains operate properly?

Look up

- ? Are ceilings water stained or cracked?
- ? Are walls water stained or cracked?
- ? These may indicate a leaking roof, defective rain gutters, or defective plumbing upstairs. Water damage could cause the ceiling or walls to collapse.

Safety

- ? Are there smoke detectors in the building?

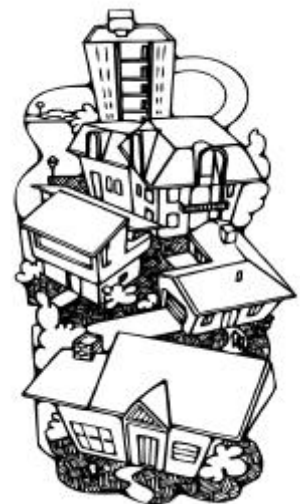
- ? Are there deadbolt locks on the apartment doors and the exterior doors?

Windows

- ? Are there storms and screens?
- ? Very gently push on the windows to see if they are secure or loose in the frame.

Rodents and roaches

- ? Open cabinets and immediately shine in flashlight



to detect roaches. Look for roach eggs.

- ? Look for rat and mouse holes and droppings in the back of cabinets and closets.

Basement

- ? Be sure to go into the basement to check on the condition of the furnace. (Make sure there is a furnace.)
- ? Even in summer, push the thermostat up to see if the furnace actually works.

- ? Look at the water heater to see if it is leaking.

- ? If you notice any serious problems, think carefully about the chance you'll be taking with your family's health and safety if you rent the apartment.

- ? Ask the landlord to put promised repairs in writing. But ask yourself: "If he didn't make these repairs for the last tenant, why should I believe he'll make the repairs for me?"

If your landlord doesn't make promised repairs, call your

local building inspection department to request an inspection.

For more information, or to file a complaint, contact the Bureau of Consumer Protection at:

(800) 422-7128

FAX: (608) 224-4939

TTY: (608) 224-5058

E-MAIL:

datcph hotline@datcp.state.wi.us

WEBSITE:

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